INTRODUCTION

The five Books of Mosses, containing accounts of the creation of the world and mythical Adam and Eve, provide the first evidence of sex based elementary division of labour and discrimination in human society. These books also depict how the mysterious inequalities between men and the woman have been created and institutionalised. The potentials of men are stated in terms of their abilities to ‘Become like Heavenly Fathers, thus, all joys, freedom and worldly comforts have been associated with them. It is also interesting to know the mythological accounts whereby man and woman were believed to be driven out of the Garden of Eden together, and were cut off both temporarily and spiritually from the presence of God. Even then woman was described unequal to man and therefore, her life prospects were restricted. Subsequently she was subjugated to man. In this way, the biological distinctions between the sexes were turned into social distinctions and were legitimised by deriving support from the Holy Texts.

The concept of woman combines ‘sex’ and ‘gender’; the former is based on biological distinctions whereas the latter is a social construction. Women, therefore, are distinguished from men on the basis of their biological reproductive attributes and the roles are assigned to them by the society in accordance with its socio-cultural values. These values define their social position, life chances and life styles. The sex based division of labour, therefore, divides occupations into three categories,
namely - exclusively Male, absolutely Female, and some carried on by men and women jointly (Davis, 1957: Blood and Goff 1980). Such a division has been rationalised through a belief that women are biologically inferior to men, have relatively less ability of physical exertion and can not perform arduous work. Therefore, all professions requiring physical exertion and stamina are necessarily allocated to men (Beck, 1980).

The assumption that women are incapable of carrying out strenuous work is increasingly challenged, especially in view of the fact that in certain societies women do carry on arduous operations, such as agriculture and construction work. Since there is no clear distinction drawn between different types of occupations, there are some jobs typed as male occupations in one society and the same may be found falling within women’s domain in another society (Epstein, 1970). It therefore follows that occupational pursuits of men and women are not determined by natural distinctions alone, but by the way men and women are socialised and prepared by a society. The female participation, particularly in economic activities is conditioned by the social structure and the social system (Weiss, et. al., 1976). Moreover, in the changing social scenario the need to lay emphasis on women’s education and their development as equal human beings has increased all over the world. This has particularly been the case after 1975, the year of women liberation movement in the West. The movement is believed to have helped women to come out of the four-walls of the house and enter into a large number of occupations which had hitherto been considered male’s domain. Indian society is in transition and
therefore experiencing considerable change with regard to the status and role of women. This has resulted in large number of publications titled as and having implications in terms of changing status of women and the like. Although to the limited extent the women in India are believed to have started departing from their traditional phase of existence. A fundamental question often raised by the researchers is: what is the social position of women in contemporary India and whether or not they are treated at par with men.

**Women's General Social Position in the Society:**

All over the world, the sex based division of labour has been the fundamental reason of perpetuation of men's dominance over women in economic activities outside home. This fundamental decision of work resulted in women's confinement to the four-walls of the home. This arrangement was rationalised on the basis of reproductive function of women. Therefore women were destined to have to carry on household chores, reproduce and bring up the children. Women's work, though difficult and full of problems, was attached little value, and thus they occupied low social position. Though women constitute approximately half of world's population, yet their representation in the modern occupations, especially those which involve authority and power remains disproportionate to their numerical strength.

The continuity of women in the low prestige occupations and their overall under representation does not mean that they remained contended with it. It may also be noted that whenever women made attempts
to make entry into gainful economic activities, there was resistance from the society, it enacted laws to ban their entry. The evidence suggests that in Europe the women were banned from the industrial employment, through the enactment of certain legislation. According to Hacker (1972), the resistance came from men who perceived women's entry into the labour market as a threat to their existence. Therefore, they made intensive use of economic, legal and ideological weapons to reduce women's employment prospects in the labour market. Not only this, they even went to the extent of excluding women from the trade union activities. They also pressurised the employer against hiring them in industries and other places of work.

Despite the odds including attitudinal adversities and deplorable conditions of work, the industrial revolution in Europe did induce some change in the lives and status of women. The most progressive aspect of change brought about by the process of industrialisation was transformation in the traditional anthropological sex-role based concept of women. Although the importance of sex based differentiation in the organisation of the society had been recognised long back, Murdock (1949), taking stock of the changing social values stressed upon the idea that such differences (biological) should not be taken to put women in the disadvantageous position. The relevance of Murdock's aforesaid argument can be validated by the fact that women in the post-industrial revolution era started receiving recognition as a cause of creative inspiration and a stimulus of some of the most important functions of the society.
Parsons' (1959) conception of women, a conformist view from the point of view of the traditional normative order and functional in nature, describes two types of most important roles for women; first, the function of socialisation of the child; and the second, stabilisation of adult personalities. Thus, Parsons not only extends women's role from mere socialisation of a child to stabilisation of the adults but also indicates a continuity in her positive functions for the society. According to him women's role is most important in the context of the contemporary industrial society. The reference to the industrial society is particularly made because of the fact that due to the process of industrialisation all over the world, the number of nuclear families has increased. In such type of families a single adult woman has to do maximum work. Therefore, he describes women’s role in a family not only in instrumental terms but also as "expressive," especially from the point of view of warmth, security and emotional support, which women provide in the socialisation of the children and stabilisation of adult personalities.

The traditionally defined role of women in household chores, in the emerging industrial societies could not prevent their participation in outside home activities. In the beginning in conjunction with their traditional 'expressive' role, they joined the occupations such as nursing, teaching, secretarial and receptionist. Benet (1972) makes critical appraisal of the ongoing changes. According to her a secretary in an office resembles a wife, mother, mistress and mate. Her office work is very much a kind of housekeeping. In other words the change which has taken place in the role
of women is only in terms of wages that she is able to earn as a secretary and the ability to move around and socialise in society. *Oakley (1974)*, looking into the new roles of women, remarked that the most important and enduring consequences of industrialisation for women have been the emergence of the modern role of house-wife as dominant feminine role.

The early years of industrialisation in Europe were regarded as years of their march to factories. The entry of women in factories especially textile, was conditioned by their knowledge of traditional textile skills that they had acquired in the family. But their entry into new sphere of economic activity did not result in their departure from socially expected family and house wife roles (*Oakley, 1974*). Therefore, the changing sex role, which became an integral part of labour market in the countries like Great Britain, France, Germany, Canada and United States, led to increase in the number of women employed outside their homes. Between 1951 and 1976, the number of employed females in Britain alone rose by three million (*Harlambose, 1987:581*). In Canada also the rate of women’s labour force participation grew from 22 per cent to 53 per cent during the period 1931 to 1983 (*Calzavara, 1988: 287*).

The rise in the rate of female participation in the labour force all over the world was attributed to a number of social factors in general and the economic development in particular. The later, it is believed, not only generated numerous opportunities in the employment sector, but also created competition among job seekers (*Semyonov, 1980:534*). In this way women started competing in the job market not only with women but also
with men. The economic boom, technological advancements in the birth control methods, access to efficient kitchen gadgets, easily available consumer goods, and the like, considerably facilitated the participation of a particular segment and class of women in the work force. In other words, all these advancements, have enabled women to carry out their dual role of keeping the house and participating in the labour force in a relatively comfortable manner (Calzavara, 1981). It may be appropriate to argue that the capitalist economic development as a process also has its own needs and compulsions. The process of industrialisation, resultant economic growth, and education of men and women have led to the competition for improving the standard of living or one’s status in relation to the other. In order to meet the basic needs by a certain segment on one hand and the emerging status consciousness of certain other segments on the other, more and more women join the work force. This results into the adoption of new values, attitudes and behaviour patterns. This has particularly been the case with young Indonesian women (Sadli, 1995).

The process has certain contradictions of its own. Though, the number of working women increased considerably within a time span of two and a half decade, yet the conditions in which they have to work are found not to be conducive to productivity and efficiency. One of the basic problems is that despite their increasing participation in the labour market; the pattern of their employment as reflected in the occupational structure of any society, largely represents them in low prestige occupations, with low pay and low status. Gunderson (1982), with reference to female workers in
Canada, argues that they earn only fifty to eighty per cent of what males earn. The main cause for such a difference in earnings is the concentration of majority of women in low wage jobs. Added to that is the increasing number of women aspirants in the labour market. Their number exceeds in relation to the availability of jobs. According to fundamental economic principle of demand and supply, the excess supply reduces the value. In the case of women this has implication in terms of reduction in their wages. The factor held responsible for the existing wage gap is the lack of trade union activities among women. The blame is put on the women themselves for this lack. It is argued that they remain too involved in their household role and thus, are not able to devote much time to union activities. The unionisation of women workers can help in the reduction of economic inequalities and their deprivation. White (1980) argues that unionisation has been found having a positive effect on women’s earnings. It therefore, can help reduce the wage gap between men and women to some extent only. As it is a known fact that even the gulf between their employment is not accidental but historically set in process which has its origin in patriarchy.

Moreover, women’s concentration in low prestige occupations which is often attributed to low level of education, lack of knowledge and training is not by choice but caused by their historically destined existential conditions. Calzavara explains that women described as less committed to their jobs as compared to men is again not a matter of their own decision but a result of their socialisation and inculcation of certain values in them. Their commitment to household role restrict their productivity investment.
As such they prefer to be employed in jobs which require less investment, higher turnovers and can accommodate high absenteeism. Absence of child care facilities at the work place also force them to remain in-doors. This pattern perpetuates sexual division of labour and discrimination to which women are subjected in their family and in the job market. The Royal Commission's report on the *Status of Women (1970: 79)*, also state that sex typing of occupation is not natural but purely a cultural phenomena.

In fact, varied explanations have set in a debate on what should be the right perspective of viewing the social status of women, the reasons for sex based division of labour and inequality between male and female roles. The approaches applied by social scientists to explain the position of women are grouped under three broad categories. The first, the functional or the conservative approach, highlights the imperative nature of sex discrimination as biological, psychological and sociological. Being normative in its orientation this approach views sex differentiation as imperative. This helps in maintaining social equilibrium and is the need of a society. 'The Feminists,' abandon the conventional argument and provide an alternative approach. According to which gender roles are determined by cultural values. The patriarchal cultural values and ideologies are *manifested in sex differentiation and the inequality between sexes results from socially constructed power relationships, e.g., patriarchy*. The third approach is Marxist. According to which the present position of women is the result of capitalist mode of economic operations. In the economic sphere, because of their socially defined dependency on males and no
ownership of property, they are reduced to a lower class citizens. They argue that the status of women reflects the general exploitation of all the workers in general and that of women in particular in a capitalist society. Moreover, this approach rejects patriarchy as having importance only in the family and not in the social or economic aspects of women labour force.

Women in India - An Historical Account:

The position of women in Indian society is better comprehended by taking into account the development and evolution of Indian civilisation. In India, the women, over the historical period of time, have been having quite a fluid and fluctuating social status. It varied from one of the social importance and freedom to that of extreme subjugation, depending upon the period and type of social system in which women lived. Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas, all depict women’s position during different stages of the Indian history. The Vedic age that extends from 2500 BC to 1500 BC was the period when it is believed women held a position of great respect and enjoyed various rights and privileges.

Asthana (1974) refers to women artisans who participated in the making of arrows, bows and agricultural implements. Girls had equal rights to education. It is believed that many women rose to become Vedic scholars, debaters, poets, teachers and administrators. Marriage was not mandatory and some women did not even marry throughout their life in the pursuit of knowledge. The child marriage was unknown, widow remarriage was permitted and it was mostly monogamous. The proposed bride held the
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Samatani (1987:31) reflects on equality between men and women during the Vedic period. The spheres of equality included freedom enjoyed by women like men in social, educational, marital and religious affairs. They even enjoyed freedom of expression, thoughts and in the articulation of philosophical dialogues. Women not only enjoyed authority in the household matters but also participated in other social and economic activities.

Women’s advice was sought not only in the household matters but also in various socio-economic and political decisions. She virtually held the status of a companion and a true friend. Shastri (1960) remarks that a wife was husband’s companion in weal and woe, mistress of the
household and a partner in all the activities - temporal or spiritual. Women’s activity sphere was unrestricted; they were free to attend and visit public meetings, assemblies and social gatherings. Her presence in religious ceremonies as a concert was must. Thus, it is evident that the community as a whole showed concern and respect for the women and they played a significant role in the life of the family, society and politics.

The deterioration in the status of women is stated to have started during the days of later Samhitas. Ajyanagar (1945) writes that Manu recommended the merger of wife’s individuality with that of her husband, strict seclusion for women and regress discipline for widows. Child marriage, polygamy and repudiation were permitted which helped in perpetuation of women’s bondage. At the same time, motherhood was glorified, chastity and innate goodness of women were adored. She had freedom only in the management of household affairs. Thus, her sphere of activity became restricted which in turn barred her mobility, and moreover, in the absence of any education she was totally cut off from the outside world. Marriageable age was gradually lowered; widow marriage and remarriage were not permitted and marriage became a irrevocable union for women.

Desai (1992:2) argues that around 300 BC status of women began to decline. The injunction of Manu stopped the practice of Upanayana for daughters. The Manu Smiriti describes the various restrictions to be observed by the women folks. He characterised women to be temperamental and emotional, and proposed checks on their education
and socialisation. With the advent of theory of perpetual tutelage by Manu, status of women deteriorated further.

*Thapar (1978:32)* observes, "The lower the status of women, the stronger was the legal tie of marriage." Not only that, it is further argued, "the patriarchal system tended to keep the status of women at low level and the emergence of the joint family with special property right for the male members reinforced male dominance."

From 1500 BC to 500 BC, Brahmanism and Upanishads were very strong in the Indian society. They advocated strict discipline in human life and started some new institutions such as Vedic sacrifices. These new institutions faced a strong reaction from the general public, particularly against Vedic sacrifices and thus, led to the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, around the 6th century BC. During the popular period of Buddhism, women were given an honourable place in the society and were admitted to the Buddhist monasteries. The order of Nun in Buddhism and Jainism provided an alternative vocation to marriage. This is endorsed by the observation made by *Thapar (1978:33)*, which states that Buddhist traditions protested against fundamentalist Hindu institutions especially Brahmanical laws which had conditioned the society to meet the needs of the powerful elite. In the context of women, Buddhism was more liberal than the Hindu traditions.

With the arrival of Islam and terror struck by marshal Turks, Hindu society became rigid on its indigenous socio-religious structure.
Some Turks entered into marriage alliances with Hindu girls after forcibly converting them to Islam. This led Hindus to further curtail the freedom of their women folk. The Purda system - a Muslim custom of covering the face with a veil, was adopted by middle-class Hindu women to protect themselves from the foreign invaders. The denial of education and advocacy of early marriage resulted into putting women under the protection of their husbands at an early age. Purda system, polygamy, wide spread practice of Sati and the like, were some of the indications of fast deteriorating status of women. The birth of a female child was not a welcome event. The girl child was considered burden by parents. This resulted in a practice of female infanticide. Social seclusion of women was a matter of pride for the men, especially among the middle and higher class families.

At the time when British imperial power established its rule over India, women were occupying a highly subjugated position in the social structure of Indian society. Her position was nothing short of a dumb driven cattle. Social thinking was at the cross roads and the growing sense of insecurity and degeneration was further stagnating the prevailing social customs regarding women. Dube (1963) argued that the dark and dismal years of the eighteenth century were believed to have left the deepest mark on the status of women. The advent of India by British brought Indians in contact with the modern west. This brought about considerable changes in the political, economic, social and cultural outlook of Indian society.

The wide spread network of Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century brought about awakening among the Indians through
education. The missionaries tried to persuade the government to abandon the policy of strict neutrality and make laws against the barbarous customs of Hindu society. Abolition of Sati (1829), legislation to stop infanticide (1870), Widow Re-marriage act of 1856, etc., introduced a new wave of cultural consciousness among Indians (Joshi, 1979: 157). The women were filled with inner urge and spiritual inspiration that led to the creativity in all walks of life. Special day schools were set up for women’s education by missionaries which brought about a considerable change and had a bearing on the outlook of women. Educated women developed altogether a new thinking as they could compare and comprehend the deplorable situation of Indian women. Women became alive to their age old sufferings and started uniting into small groups to raise their voice against inhuman treatment meted out to them in the past. They did not put forward any new theory as such; all they wanted was restoration of Vedic age status of women. It was in a way revival of indigenous ideals. It may be suggested that the Indian women were getting inspiration and sustenance from her own past.

Luthra (1976:2) had stated that the British did not consciously set out to improve the women’s lot in India, but the ideas brought from the West created an atmosphere for the same. With the struggle for freedom gaining momentum, the crusade for women’s liberation also became intensive. It started with an attack on age old custom, which helped in improving the social aspect of women’s life. Gradually the women started working for social, religious and political organisations. As in the United States and Britain, women’s movement in India was also carried out by the
women from middle class families, which had male members with western education and were awakened to the idea of equality of sexes. Everett (1981:190) described this Indian women’s movement as bourgeois feminist movement. Some of the enlightened and educated men like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Keshab Chand Sen, Maharishi Karve realised the potential of women folk and initiated social reforms. They all worked for emancipation of the status of women by raising their voice against barbarous social customs.

Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru were ardent supporter of women liberation and their equality with men folk. Both of them lauded the women’s great qualities of head and heart, patience, endurance, silent and dignified sufferings and encouraged them to take part in the freedom struggle which ultimately meant their freedom too (Nanda, 1976). Encouraged by such an attitude, women actively participated in the struggle for freedom, e.g., Rani Laxmi Bai, Sarojni Naidu, Kamla Nehru, Annie Besant and others are some of the examples.

Indian National Congress had provision for women’s membership. From its very inception women participated in its sessions, as early as in 1889 (Basu, 1976). Swaran Kumari started the first women’s movement named Sakhi Samiti in 1886 to mobilise women to participate in the welfare of the country. Women worked as liaison between various leaders. They also used to help in the circulation of leaflets and literature. Some of the women even run underground factories for arms and
ammunition. For example, Roopvati Jain at the age of 17, was in-charge of an ammunition factory run under the name of Himalayan Toilets at Delhi.

Women took active part in Swadeshi (1904 - 1911), Non Co-operation (1918 - 1923), Civil Disobedience (1930 - 1934) and Quit India Movements (1942). Side by side, women also started organising Sewa Sadna in 1909. The pioneer women leader Ramabai Ranade started Indian Women Association in Madras in 1917. National Council of Women and All India Women’s Conference were formed in 1920 and 1926 respectively. Both these organisations worked towards the eradication of women’s problems such as dowry, discrimination in employment and Hindu Code Bill. It was with their efforts, Indian Women got the right of political representation in 1937. They were elected to Provincial Assemblies and rose to become Ministers in Provincial Cabinets.

Understanding the change in the status of women during freedom struggle, Basu (1976) observes, “it is doubtful if a century of preaching and social reforms would have brought about the same change in the position of Indian women as has been achieved in the wake of the two decades of political struggle in India”. With the gradual transfer of power from British to Indian hands, women acquired a significant role in the democratic process. After independence, the constitution of India provided principle of equality in the preamble itself. The Fundamental Rights especially Social Equality under Article 15, Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 36-51), election laws, equal opportunity in employment, adult franchise, prohibition of polygamy, equal inheritance rights, dowry
prohibition act, law prohibiting child marriage, etc., are few of the important provisions guaranteed by the Constitution of independent India. Mehta (1987) observes that ‘Ancient Mother Supreme’ after undergoing various distortions and humiliations of the middle ages, finally has once again been recognised at least in theory.

Women -- who represent 48.2 percent of India’s population (Census 1991), have been one of the target groups in the development plans, since independence. Although efforts have been made for their upliftment and for their assimilation in national mainstream, unfortunately very little progress was achieved during the first few Five Year Plans. International Women’s Year in 1975 and International Women’s Decade 1976-85, stressed upon the general public and government to assess the actual position of Indian women and review the progress made through various development plans. As a result, in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985), women were recognised as a separate target group. Various development schemes were started to bring them at par with the men in social, economic, legal and political spheres. The changed socio-economic conditions and politico-legal provisions have widened the scope of women’s education and employment. It has not only affected women’s thinking but has also induced a change in the men’s attitude. Encouraged by it, women started taking economically gainful employment outside home. Various regulations and technological advancements facilitated this process. According to Department of Women and Child development, employment of women in the organised sector (which consists of public sector and non-agricultural
private sector) has increased from 19.30 Lacks in 1971 to 37.96 Lacks in 1991. The more significant aspect of change in the status of women is that they are now, though in a limited number, joining the occupations and professions which have hitherto been the preserves of men and considered unsuitable and beyond the capabilities of women.

**Women in New Roles- Some Issues:**

*This is quite heartening to notice that in the modern India more people are economically gainfully employed than at any other time in its history. This increase in the number of workers is accompanied by increase in the number of women taking up economically gainful employment. Increasing number of women as lawyers, engineers, doctors, business managers, executives and commercial pilots, challenges the myth that women are incapable of carrying out the occupations held and monopolised by men in the past.*

*Karnaik (1973), observes that a growing number of women qualifying as professionals indicate that no profession is beyond the reach of women. This trend is fast emerging throughout India. The various success stories published in popular magazines and research studies about working women in occupations such as, running vast fruit orchards, poultry farms, private business, tea shops, public transport drivers (though rare in India), riksha pullers, postwomen, police constable, are the living examples which confirm the view that women can carry out practically any job or profession successfully. Though, this phenomenon may be confined to a part of the society only, yet the Census of India data of 1961, 1971 and*
1981, reveals that there is a slow but steady increase in the number of women taking up economic activities which for them have never been available in the past.

The increase in the number of women in all categories of occupations has not been uniform in relation to men. The number of working women in India, according to 1991 census is only 16.43 per cent of the total female population of the country; among these only 14% are in the organised sector and less than 1% have reached executive rank. In this way the women are still markedly under-represented in the labour market. Moreover, they continue to be employed more in those areas in which the women possessed more skills such as textile and agriculture. Therefore, there are many questions which arise -- why does such widespread under-representation occur in general and higher ranking jobs in particular? What is the reaction of the society to the change in traditional role of women? How does the society view the women employed in male dominated professions? To what extent it has helped women in gaining the status of equality?

The people's attitude is a powerful source of discrimination. It reflects the prevalence of particular type of social consciousness in a society and which people acquire due to a number of socio-cultural factors. Society's expectations of the respective male and female roles are based on past trends and sex stereotyping. In the world at large and in the Indian context, sex stereotyping starts at a very early age in the home or at the infant stage when parents buy toys for the kids. The same attitude is
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Ironically the advent of new technologies which is expected to open up new avenues have adversely affected women in many areas. Since they have been late starter in education, lack of necessary technological skills required in the job market have held back the women from entering new occupational spheres. Das (1968) observes that development does not produce improvement in the status of women; rather it generates perpetual social and economic disparities and discrimination on the basis of sex. The
employers do not have very healthy attitude towards working women either. Many employers argue that in a country like India, where there are so many educated unemployed men, employing a women would mean merely supplementing the income of her family, whereas a man would mean providing livelihood to a family.

Kapur (1974) argues that the gate keepers of the professional world view women with amusement, suspicion and hostility even when they are well qualified for entering into these professions. She is solely held responsible for broken homes, degeneration of joint family system, improper development of child, delinquency, and rise in crime rate. The recent studies on working women reveal varying results. Most of the women in India are concentrated in low paid stereotyped jobs such as textiles, bidi, electronics industry, constructional and agricultural labour.

According to Singh (1989), since female labour is paid less therefore the employers prefer to employ women in the jobs which are tedious and require least training. Women’s rare participation in trade union activities further leaves them with weak bargaining power. Taking its benefits, employers continue to pay them less. This is worth noting as the conditions were almost same even thirty years back. One finds practice of discrimination in wage payment even in the 1960s. Brahme (1959: 282), refers to discrimination against women in the payment of wages. The practice of unequal work is wide spread in India and this discrimination may be attributed to the discriminatory recruitment policies. As most of the women are in unorganised sector, Equal Remuneration Act 1976, which was
enacted to ensure wage parity between men and women is inadequately observed. There is also complete absence of rules and regulations specifying the minimum standards of working conditions in the unorganised sector.

Women who start a career in male dominated occupations often drop out taking inferior jobs in order to accommodate the demand of her other gender specific roles. Unfortunately the world of work has not adjusted to the new needs of women. It is women who are made to adjust. In consequence, the movement of women into higher status positions has been slowed (Lopata, et. al, 1990). The process of resolution of such a conflict is an act of adjustment that often puts a limit to her endowment. Discrimination in occupational sphere continues to characterise the women. The women working in high status jobs where their number in proportional terms is very low, also experience discrimination in promotional and other day-to-day activities. They are denied reasonable posts requiring major decision and policy making.

Korvayarvi (1990) states that there is very rigid and permanent horizontal and vertical division of labour according to gender within the labour market. In spite of their higher level of education, women are rarely engaged in managerial tasks. A historical trend favouring male and perpetrating the gender gap in the hierarchy of professionals exists and these stereotypes are reinforced from one generation to the next. Although, women have entered politics and their political participation increased, it is still a taboo in rural areas. Though, urban surroundings encourage political
participation, yet the masculine power handicaps women’s integration in politics. Women who participate in political activities generally come from higher social classes. In other words both class and cultural biases continue to haunt women.

Indian society, with the exception of some of the north-eastern Hill states where matriarchy prevails, is patriarchal and therefore, is male dominated. Its value system, with a definite bias against women, always discourages employment of women and their participation in economic activities outside home. Employed woman is considered a threat to men’s ego. The prejudice created by cultural conditioning and socialisation process right from their childhood makes men believe their superiority over women and make women accept their inferiority in relation to men. There is a very clear demarcation between men’s and women’s work. Men feel that a woman boss intimidates their sense of masculinity and are reluctant to share or surrender their power to women. Male chauvinism is most vital hindrance that puts brakes to the progress of women, because of their fossilised attitude they are not ready to accept the women working outside the home. They try to discourage women at all cost and quite often resort to derogatory tirades such as character assassination and sexual harassment. The general tendency observed in day-to-day life is that the more successful a woman; more her male colleagues try to discourage and defame her.

Regarding the extent to which the women’s new roles have helped them in gaining equal social status in society; the above discussion reveals that more and more women have emerged from the mother supreme
to that of equitable status. At the same time a vast majority of the Indian women continue to constitute a big part of underprivileged citizens. Though, they have proved their abilities in male dominated world but their activities are still determined by the type of attitudes that are held by their husbands and other male members of the families. Khanna and Vergese (1978) long ago argued that the feminine and professional role expectations are pictured by society as being mutually exclusive because of which one might think that women who are career minded are not feminine. Thus, there is so much of ambivalence and disapproval facing women who wish to be gainfully employed.

The paradox emerging in the contemporary society is between the increasingly favourable attitude among women towards gainful employment and the conservative attitude of majority of men towards them. Although, the income earned by women is welcomed, there are men who hold critical views about their wives working in offices and mixing up with the men colleagues in the official routines. They let loose various kinds of excesses including wife battering. The traditional role expectations made on women by marriage and family, coupled with stereotype that woman’s place is in the home has resulted in a lower commitment to their new professional role (Joshi, 1993:244)

A large section of women is still not aware of their own potential and thus, their negligence adds to the wastage of human resources. Most of the women are confined to the unorganised sector and are in the lowest cadre of organised sector. They are harassed, not paid salaries equal
to their work and they do not enjoy other benefits accorded to men workers. What exists these days is comparable to what Kapoor (1974) observed, when she argued that working women (some fortunate) do enjoy some status by virtue of their equitable ability and stamina along with the blessings of having enlightened husbands, family and employers. But on the whole they did not have equal status with men despite their economic independence and fundamental rights which enshrine equality of sexes. She had said that the economic status of working women was determined by the factors such as opportunities for employment and training, promotion prospects and job environment, whereas her social status was determined by the type of attitudes that were held by male members of their family, friends and society at large.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the following trends seem to be in the offing in the Indian society. The status of women, by and large, is linked with their traditionally defined social role in the society. Therefore, the social status of women remain dependent on its recognition by society. It therefore implies that status of women is dependent on the extent to which her status is attached value by the society. Accordingly, the change in the status of women occurs with the change in socio-cultural values of the society. This follows that with successive changes taking place in various spheres of society, the role and status of women is also progressing accordingly. It has also been observed that the changing scenario of Indian society, has resulted in greater occupational diversification. In the context of women, the expansion of economic and
administrative structure of society has also opened avenues for the entry of women in various roles, which at one time were only within men’s domain. But, the absorption of women is increasing in low paid occupations and that too in unorganised sector. In other words the change is there but not appreciable that can affect change in the social structure of the society. The women, therefore, are also expected to look after their traditional roles along with the new ones. This paradox of women’s life makes them less committed to their jobs in the non-traditional work sphere.

Women Police- Emergence of New Role in Historical Perspective:

The need for policewomen to deal with women and girls held in custody by police and law enforcing agencies was first of all recognised in 1845, when New York city appointed ‘Police matrons.’ This was the result of the efforts of certain women’s organisations such as Women’s Christian Temperance Union, taking an active interest in securing under women’s supervision of the women and girls held in police custody, jails, detention-houses and even in hospitals. (Owings, 1969:97). By 1888, although, many other cities of United States of America had started recruiting ‘Police matrons,' they did not have the authority and powers of a ‘Police constable.’ It was in 1905, when policewomen were granted full police authority to deal directly with women to check the threatening social conditions, affecting their morale safety.

In Britain, in 1883, the metropolitan police employed two women to supervise the women held in police station whilst awaiting trial (Carrier, 1988:1). Subsequently more women were employed on part time
basis to assist male force in supervision of women in custody. They were more of experienced social workers who used to help to enquire into the cases involving women and children. Germany was the first country to have a government employee called “Policewoman” in 1903, in the city of Stuttgart. In the beginning, these police women were assigned the job of supervision and enforcement of laws concerning the prostitution (Owings, 1969:72).

The entry of women into the police force in Britain was the result of efforts of mainly two women’s organisations, namely, Women Police Volunteers and National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain & Ireland. Jones (1986:1), attributes emergence of women police force to the deteriorating social and moral conditions of women before and during First World War, which prompted various voluntary organisations to set-up preventive patrols to assist and protect girls from the attention of the brutal and licentious soldiery. These organisations generated a public concern regarding the social and moral conditions of girls and young women. They established the fact that there exists a permanent sphere for policewomen in every country and city. Thus, they helped in creating an impact on public and government about the necessity of policewomen to curb the social menace of degenerated sex tendencies.

In 1914, Criminal Law Amendment Committee organised a meeting at Caxton Hall London, and carried-out a resolution for the appointment of policewomen with the power, equal to that of men constables. The Reverend Mr. Cobb, who chaired the meeting, praised the
British police but at the same time felt that men were not always competent for the multifarious duties placed on police constables. Carrier (1988:3) observed, “With women police there would be less of red tape, a little less of brutal force and a little more of humanity and a little less of the spirit that a person before the court must be convicted anyhow.” These various efforts were recognised in 1918 by the new Commissioner of Police, Nevil Macready, as women could be employed in police patrols, with the prior approval of Home office. At this time these women patrols did not have the status and power of a police constable because of a particular clause in the existing Police Act.

Baird Committee of 1920, considered the role of policewomen and recommended that police women should be fully attested, highly trained and should form an integral part of the police force. It further recommended that an assistant inspector of constabulary should be appointed to inspect policewomen and to promote their welfare and efficiency. In spite of a favourable report of the committee, very little progress was made because the decision whether policewomen should be employed was left to the local authorities. Only significant development of that time was made in 1922 by Commissioner Macready, when he granted the full powers of a sworn constable to the policewomen.

Though by 1930, most of the European countries had women officers in police, it was still not an easy career for the women. The negative male attitude towards women in law enforcement agency has always been the main impeding factor in the growth of policewomen. In
1920, while commenting on the entry of women in police, a member of Parliament in Britain called it, "an extravagant eccentricity upon whose entertainment public money should not be wasted" (Nigam, 1963:26).

The outbreak of Second World War enhanced the job opportunities for women in police. In 1939, Women's Auxiliary Police Corps was formed and by the end of the war, it had a good number of full-time members performing the whole new range of law enforcement duties. The war-time contributions of policewomen helped them in gaining the recognition and transform the public attitude towards their importance in police work. This was reflected in a report by the Post-war Committee in 1944, which recommended the employment of policewomen on a wide range of duties (Jones, 1986:4). Although, few policewomen were assigned the duties which were traditionally being performed by male colleagues, such as investigation work (CID); the majority of them continued to perform duties which were based on sexual division of labour. The increased rate of female and juvenile crime in Britain in 1960s, led more women getting recruited in police. They carried on duties like interrogation and searching of female and juvenile offenders. Thus, they continued with their traditional stereotype feminine role.

**Policewomen in India:**

The police is an ancient institution in India. Kautilya in his Arthashastra written in about 310 B.C. has given an elaborate account of police system of that time. In the ancient India, policing was based on the idea of local responsibility. The headman of the village was responsible for
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During the British colonial rule, there was a marked increase in crime, robberies and murders all over India. The country needed a fully trained and disciplined organisation to detect and prevent the crime. Consequently Police Act of 1861 was enacted. In 1902, Lord Curzon appointed another police commission under the chairmanship of Sir Frazer, which recommended a new policy for training and recruitment of the police forces. After independence, the police was reorganised and certain new
elements were added to make it an efficient instrument of public service. The creation of Indian Police Service, and remodelling of the police forces of the princely states were some of the major reforms carried out by the Government of India.

The services of women have been used for spying in ancient India. Mahabharata and other historic texts give a lucid account of women used in spying by various kingdoms. The first recorded evidence of women in police uniform is of 1938, when Kanpur administration faced a delicate situation of dealing with female agitation and protests. In this strike, women in the labour force participated actively. They stopped willing workers from entering the work premises by lying down on the roads. Learning from this incidence and to prevent it in future, government recruited women in police in 1939. The State of Travancore also appointed women as special constables in the same year.

After independence, changing social and political scenario, partition of the country, influx of refugees and increase in the women related crime necessitated the appointment of women police in various states. They not only helped in relief and rehabilitation but also provided security to various leaders who visited the refugee camps (Bhardwaj, 1976:39). After independence women actively participated in labour strikes and political agitation, which created the need for women police, as the national leaders, owing to their pre-independence experience, were against male police handling female agitators.
In the post-independence period, a number of legislation were enacted such as Factory Act (1948), Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, Hindu Adoption and Inheritance Act of 1950-1956, Anti Dowry Act (1961,86), Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act. These mobilised law enforcement agencies towards the recruitment of women in police. Educational development, industrialisation and urbanisation opened new avenues of employment for women. It not only facilitated women's participation in all walks of life but also exposed her to the dangers of modern industrial society. The crime rate and Juvenile delinquency have been showing uninterrupted multiplication. The crime against women has shown marked increase since independence. All these factors forced the police administration to realise the need to have women in the police. Hence it paved the way for recruitment of women in police. Delhi and Punjab were first to appoint women police on regular basis in 1948. Today, all most all the states and union territories have policewomen employed in various ranks ranging from constable to superintendent of police.

The increasing employment of women in police is justified by the fact that a number of laws have been enacted as mentioned above to provide security to women in general. During the last few decades, there has been an alarming increase in the crime rate, in which women have been involved both as victims and criminals. We frequently come across reports of women being burnt alive for dowry or raped, not only in residential premises but also in police stations. Across the country as a whole, 74,093 cases have been registered under six categories of crime in 1991, against
53,860 in 1987. The most cruel form of violence, dowry death showed an increase of 170 per cent between 1987 and 1991. The alarming fact is that in India a rape took place every 54 minute, molestation every 26 minute, kidnapping and abduction every 43 minute, eve-teasing every 51 minute, dowry death every 102 minute and an act of cruelty against women every 33 minute. In other word, a criminal offence was committed against women every 7 minute (Gill, 1994).

The functions of policewomen in India are however quite limited. In principle, policewomen are supposed to have the same duties as the policemen but in practice they are playing only a peripheral role and are used for certain selected jobs only. The main duties performed by policewomen are:

Investigation and interrogation of offences related to women and children.

a) Assistance in cases related to immoral trafficking.

b) Arrest, search and escort of women offenders.

c) To guard women suspects/criminals in police stations and jails.

d) VIP Security and escort duties

Regulating women’s meetings and processions

a) As a guide on the railway stations, airports etc.

b) Traffic duties

Policewomen in Himachal Pradesh:

Women in Himachal Pradesh have been actively involved in the production activities and carrying out arduous agricultural and
horticultural operations, cattle tending and weaving art. Their entry into service sector, especially police is of recent origin. In November 1966, two women constables were recruited in the security arrangements of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama, who was based in Dharamsala. Their duty was to carry out search and security checks on women visitors. Later in 1973, when the Bhuntar airport in Kullu District started civilian flights, two more constables were recruited to carry out the security checks of women passengers. In Himachal Pradesh, crime against women increased by 103 per cent between 1987 and 1991. The total number of registered cases went up from 298 (1987) to 605 (1991). Dowry deaths jumped from just 4 in 1987 to 30 in 1991, kidnapping and abduction from 85 to 150, incidents of molestation from 122 to 242 and rape from 34 to 91.

Rise in women accused and women victims, especially those involved in sexual crimes, led to the formal introduction of women in police force in this Hill state in 1975. First batch of women constables consisted of 27 women and was trained at Police Training School, Junga in Shimla district. Initially, women were recruited regularly on yearly basis, but after a few years, the recruitment were made only on compassionate grounds, i.e., the wards of deceased police personnel were employed. In June 1981, the strength of policewomen in Himachal was 49 constables and 14 head-constables, and by 1990 the total posted strength increased to 188 women. Although, its growth and development have rather been slow, its emergence itself suggests that women in Himachal Pradesh are making departure from
their traditionally defined status and role and police is also becoming a new career for them.

Assumptions:

In the light of foregoing discussion regarding the rationale of having women police force, the tasks assigned to them, the general attitude of society towards police in general and policewomen in particular, the following assumptions are formulated:

Since police service involves risk taking and various other types of hazards, it is contended that women who join this force at the lower cadres have the following characteristics:

a) Lower and middle class socio-economic status.
b) Family’s economic compulsions to join police service.
c) Personal value for police service.

2. Indian society being characterised by tradition and modernity, the public response towards employment of women in police is not very encouraging.

3. Since the educational level of police personnel in the lower and middle cadres is generally low, the policewomen are likely to face discriminatory, derogatory and uncooperative attitude of their men colleagues towards them.

4. Since working in police involves duties at odd hours, the physical exploitation of police women can not be ruled out and they are likely to face some problems in their social and marital adjustments.

5. Besides various problems, police as a career seems to provide better prospects for women in terms of:
   a) Employment.
   b) Empowerment
c) Recognition of their capabilities.

d) Self-realisation of the importance of their role in the society in the times to come and resultant increase in their social prestige.

e) Better future prospects.

Objectives of the Study:

The widely held assumption regarding women employment, especially in the lower cadres, states that women join a particular job to supplement the meagre economic resources of the household. This implies that women joining certain levels of labour force come from low socio-economic family background. Since job in police involves power and prestige, in sharp contrast to the widely held assumption, women from relatively better of socio-economic family backgrounds may also be opting for this new role. It is therefore, expected that by and large policewomen come from lower and lower middle class families. Keeping in view the above two arguments, the first objective of this study is to analyse the socio economic background and profile of women police of Himachal Pradesh.

Although, the women in India in general and Himachal Pradesh in particular have always been associated with agricultural and other types of household activities, their employment in formal occupations remained very limited. Police occupation involves dealing with anti-social elements, criminals, and other categories of low offenders. To deal with such situations the society needs a brave and tough force. Contrary to this the women in general are socialised to be submissive and restricted in terms of participation in activities in which males are involved. A question arises; what factors act as motivational force for women to join police? The second
objective of this exercise is to empirically find out how do they take on to police role?

Police as a profession has an organisational structure, having a well-defined hierarchy of role-relations. The tasks performed by police personnel include, general social welfare activities, criminal investigations, making arrests, taking remand of the offenders and doing search operations. All these activities involve tactful handling and high level of technical and legal knowledge. How do the police women acquire the training and how do they carry on their role? These are some of the questions that need an understanding. Keeping in view this aspect, the third objective of the study is to analyse the organisational structure of Himachal Pradesh police and examine the other related aspects of policewomen in this organisation.

There is a general feeling that, what is taught in the training is highly ideal in nature whereas actual performance on the whole is very different. In order to ascertain actual situation, the fourth objective of the study was to analyse role performance by women in police and the society's perception of the women in uniform. In the other words, the objective is to analyse the response of society towards their role.

Fifth, every organisation evolves certain mechanisms to keep up the morale of its employees. The role of police, which is significant from the point of view of law and order in a society and involves hazards of all kind, also requires a system of rewards and incentives to keep up the morale of the incumbents of the role. In this context, this study also makes an
attempt to examine and understand the welfare measures adopted by the police department for policewomen and the career prospects in terms of promotions and rewards.

Lastly, what difference role of policewomen makes in the life of women in terms of their status and role in the society.

Method and Materials:

In Social Science research methodology is very significant. First, it helps in the formulation of theoretical concepts which are vital from the point of view of the study under consideration. Second, through methodological procedures the researcher is able to collect facts empirically which further facilitate reformation of concepts and theory. The important point to keep in mind is that sometimes a large number of controversial issues may emerge and give rise to further debates. Though, some times such issues or questions may just arise (in descriptive or explanatory studies) because of the "door knocking" style of conducting research. However, the emergence of controversies in a scientifically and carefully carried out study are very significant for the basic objectives of social research. In fact, this is the focal point which validates the idea that mere fact finding is no substitute for substantiated and in-depth study of social phenomenon. It can however be argued that this very aspect calls for a sound grounding in the use and selection of methods for conducting research. Following this argument, the present study also takes care of adopting and developing a method through which not only the facts are
gathered but also certain inferences are drawn, so that the theories which are applied to the study can also be tested.

Nature of Study and Research design:

The women are making a departure from their traditional roles and are fast trying to break into the male dominant professions. Police is one of such professions that is relatively new to the women. The present study is designed to analyse this new occupational role of women involving analysis of socio-economic profile, reasons for opting this occupation, role performance, occupational and organisational constraints, and its consequences for the traditional feminine role.

This new profession is yet to gain recognition and since very little work has been done on this topic so far, the present study of policewomen is descriptive and exploratory in nature. It is desirable to explain the meaning and contents of descriptive and exploratory research design. A descriptive study is about "what happened", it tries to describe the phenomenon, the situation and the events. In such studies the researcher observes and then he describes what has been observed. The descriptions are typically more accurate and precise. The quality of descriptions and their ability to be generalised are the important attributes of the descriptive studies. Thus, description is precise measurement and reporting of the characteristics of the phenomenon under study (Babbie, 1992: 111).

The explanatory study tells about "why" or "how" it happened. It provides a beginning familiarity to the topic and is purposeful when the
studies. Thus, description is precise measurement and reporting of the characteristics of the phenomenon under study (Babbie, 1992: 111).

The explanatory study tells about “why” or “how” it happened. It provides a beginning familiarity to the topic and is purposeful when the subject under study is new or unstudied as is the case of present study. The explanatory study yields a new insight into the topic for research. Thus, it is an attempt to develop an initial rough understanding of some phenomenon. This provisional explanation becomes bases for a systematic investigation.

In both type of studies there exists a basic unit which is to be studied. These units under study are called Units of Analysis. The unit of analysis are the things whose characteristics are observed, described and explained. In the case of present study the unit of analysis selected was the individual, i.e. policewomen.

Study Area:

The study was conducted in Himachal Pradesh. Situated in the North-west mountain region of the Himalayas, the state has an area of 55,673 Sq. Kms and a population of 51,70,877 (1991 Census). It has high mountain ranges of Himalayas and a large number of big and small rivers. The climate of the state is generally cool but the winters are very cold and mountains of the upper areas remain snow clad. The state is quite rich in forest wealth. Agriculture and horticulture are the main occupations of the people of the state. A huge quantity of fruits are grown, especially apple and as such Himachal Pradesh is known as “Apple State.” There are only a
few well developed town in the state and Shimla, the capital, is the only mountain city declared as metropolitan centre. The Himachal Pradesh came into existence on 15th April, 1948 as a centrally administered territory with the integration of 30 erstwhile princely states. The state was enlarged on 1st November, 1966 with the merger of few more districts of former Punjab state and later on 25th January 1971, Himachal Pradesh attained full statehood.

The female population of the state is 49.9 per cent and has a literacy rate of 52.46 per cent. The women of the state need a special mention here, because of the important role they play in Himachal’s economy and the status they enjoy in the society. They work harder than their male counterparts in and outside the home. Their major activities include agriculture, handloom and handicrafts, cattle rearing and looking after the household chores. Malnutrition, unhygienic work conditions and social and physical exploitation, characterise their existence. The occupational profile of women in government offices indicate an increase in their number whereas working population in various industries have shown a mixed trend. Thus, there has been a relatively higher tendency to opt for government service sector. Associated with development there has also been an increase in crime rate against women and the number of women criminals. For the smooth and effective implementation of the law and order the state is divided into three police zones viz., Northern, Central and Southern with their headquarters at Dharamsala, Mandi and Shimla respectively.
Universe and Sample:

The universe for this study consisted of one hundred and eighty policewomen in all who joined Himachal police 1975 onwards. These policewomen are spread over the entire state due to their postings in different police stations.

The term sample denotes a part of the universe or the cases selected from a large population. In the present study, since the universe was spread over the entire state with a small study population, it did not require any sampling as such. But in view of the difficulty and hazards involved in approaching all the women police personal spread over 12 districts and 77 police stations throughout the State, it became imperative to rationalise the selection of the cases for the purpose of data collections. First of all, Lahul and Spiti districts was dropped as there was no policewomen posted there. Out of the remaining eleven districts, 6 districts were selected on the basis of random sampling procedure. In this process district Chamba, Kinnaur, Una, Bilaspur and Hamirpur were eliminated. It may also be mentioned that their elimination did not affect the sample size as few policewomen were posted there (Table 1) After that only 135 policewomen remained in the list. The data therefore could be collected from 135 policewomen posted in the districts of Shimla, Mandi, Dharamsala, Kullu, Sirmour and Solan. The 24 cases were left as they were not available for the purpose of interviews. Hence, the present study virtually used purposive sample which is described as the one, meant for serving the purpose, collection of facts and their analysis.
not available for the purpose of interviews. Hence, the present study virtually used purposive sample which is described as the one, meant for serving the purpose, collection of facts and their analysis.

Table 1 : District wise Distribution of women police in Himachal Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of police stations</th>
<th>No. of police lines</th>
<th>P. S. O. D.</th>
<th>Total authorised strength</th>
<th>Total posted strength</th>
<th>Short fall</th>
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<td>ASI</td>
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<td>Solan</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Kullu</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mandi</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Una</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Chamba</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Shimla</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Hamirpur</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lahul &amp; Spiti</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>12</td>
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Data and Tools of Collection:

The present study being descriptive and exploratory in nature, both the primary and secondary sources have been used for the collection of relevant information. The primary sources pertained to empirical exercise which involved personal interviews with the subject of study and field observations of policewomen. The secondary source on the other hand consisted of available literature such as books, journals, reports and other relevant materials.

Since the study was aimed at exploring and describing the various aspects of women in police, personal interviews were conducted by
using a structured interview schedule. The structured interview schedule is a document containing questions which are to be filled by the interviewer after getting information through interviews from the informants. It contains standard questions classified into groups. The interview schedule in view of the objectives of the study consisted of variables measuring socio-economic status, causes and conditions of joining police, organisational structure of Himachal Pradesh police, role performance, role conflict and society’s response. In spite of having official permission to observe and interview the working of policewomen at their respective places of postings, the researcher anticipated that the policewomen may try to conceal the facts or give generally acceptable replies to the interview schedule. In order to avoid this possibility, the researcher not only made several trips to the police stations police lines and various police offices but also tried to build a personal rapport through informal conversations during and off the duty hours. This not only helped in collecting the correct information but also the policewomen came out with real life experience which otherwise may not have been possible in the disciplined formal organisation like police.

**Data Analysis:**

The data thus collected through interviews and field observation was analysed. The data analysis render the data simple, apparent, comprehensible, concise and logical. In the analysis first of all code design was prepared for each and every question. The answers with similar view point and underlying unity were grouped under one group. On the basis of coding the information was converted into numbers. The
numerical information thus derived was tabulated, and frequency and percentage of various categories calculated. For better visual and quick presentation, the same were plotted using bar charts.

**Significance of Study:**

The study is significant as it analyses the changing role of women in modern society. Women are not only finding a place outside the traditional prescribed roles but are also fast entering into occupations hitherto considered as male domain. The present study regarding the women’s newly acquired role is of much significance in the context of prevailing traditional value structure and the demands and expectations of the changing society. Policing is one such occupation which is structured by gender. Being women in a masculine occupational culture, it presents female workers with the problem of managing their gender in interaction with male colleagues. Owing to the comparatively conservative attitude of larger population of Himachal Pradesh, and the contrasting roles which policewomen adopt at work, the present study become all the more significant. It is expected that study will have some implications in the context of role theory, sociology of organisation and professions.

**Chapter Scheme:**

Chapter 1. Policewomen - A Socio-economic Profile

Chapter 2. Role Taking, Causes and Conditions

Chapter 3. Himachal Police: Organisation, Training, and Role Performance
Chapter 4. Gender Interaction, Role Conflict and Society’s Response

Summary and Conclusions